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ABSTRACT

This survey explored the reasons why 30-40% of prospective students every semester who apply for admission to Santa Ana College fail to register, identified characteristics of non-registrants, and attempted to determine whether aid and/or intervention by college staff could haveprevented these pre-registration drop-outs. A sample of 130 was randomly selected (from the 1,758 persons who applied in spring 1978 but did not register for classes) to participate in telephone interviews; 80% were successfully contacted. Interviewers assigned up to three reasons for non-registration per respondent. Results indicated that 22% failed to register because desired classes were closed; 20% reported classes of interest were not offered or offered at inconvenient times; 16.3% decided to attend other schools; and 13.4% cited employment circumstances, such as changing jobs, as the reason for not registering. Non-registrants were generally older, had more college experience, and applied for admission earlier than registrants. Recommendations on how to lower the non-registration rate included opening additional sections of closed courses during registration and providing clearer registration information and assistance for applicants on late registration and class petitioning. (TR)

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Why Many Prospective Students Don't Come Back

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SANTA ANA COLLEGE
Rancho Santiago Community College District

JC 780 333

WHY MANY (30% - 40%) WHO APPLY FOR ADMISSION DON'T REGISTER FOR ANY CLASSES

METHOD

. RESEARCH OFFICE TELEPHONED 104 NON - REGISTRANTS

RESULTS

. REASONS FOR NOT REGISTERING

- 22% said class was closed
- 16% are going to other schools for variety of reasons
- 15% said class not offered at convenient time
- 15% had unspecified reasons, merely changed minds
- the rest had a large variety of reasons

. NON - REGISTRANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

- they are older than registrants
- they have had more college experience than registrants
- they apply for admission earlier than registrants

RECOMMENDATIONS

. OPEN ADDITIONAL SECTIONS OF CLOSED CLASSES DURING REGISTRATION

. PROVIDE CLEARER REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS REGARDING

- late registration
- petitioning a class

WHY MANY PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS DON'T COME BACK

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Santa Ana College
April 1978

Background

Every semester a significant number of students apply for admission to Santa Ana College but fail to return to register. This survey: 1) explored the reasons why 30% to 40% of prospective students who applied did not register, 2) identified characteristics of the non-registrant population, and 3) attempted to determine whether or not aid and/or intervention by college staff could have prevented these persons from "dropping out". With this population identified and their reasons for not returning specified, measures, such as specifically aimed recruitment or adaptive registration procedures, may be formulated which will alleviate this loss of prospective students.

Methodology

It was decided that telephone interviews would elicit the most reliable response and the largest response rate for the lowest cost. A sample of 130 prospective students was randomly selected from 1758 persons who applied for admission for Spring 1978 but did not register for any classes. Because of the large response rate that could be expected from telephone interviews, a small sample could be reliably used. Additionally, in telephone interviewing, the smaller the sample, the less margin of possible error. Responses were obtained from 104 persons, or 80% of the sample. (The remaining 20% included persons who had moved out of the area, had no phone number listed and did not respond to a mailed inquiry, and those who, after repeated attempts, simply could not be reached.) Respondents were asked over the telephone why they changed their minds between the time that they registered and the time of registration, according to the interview format included in the appendix of this report. An attempt was made to standardize the interview format to ensure reliability of response but, at the same time, provide for personalized contact to provide for validity of response.

Additional data including age, sex, educational background, and date of original application was also collected.

Findings

Reasons Given. Table 1 provides a listing and distribution of reasons reported by respondents for not registering for classes. Up to three reasons for each person could be included. For example, if a respondent said that he changed to the day shift at his place of employment and therefore could not enroll in the desired evening class, both "changed employment circumstances" and "class not offered at convenient time" were noted. Also, a significant portion of the sample (11.5%) did register, after the sample had been selected.

As can be seen, the largest concentration of respondents reported that the desired class was closed (22%). Classes most often referred to in this category included Welding, Conversational Spanish, Women's Body Conditioning, and various Business courses.

"Going to another school" was the second most frequently specified reason (16.3%). The reasons given for choosing another school instead of SAC are varied and are listed in the appendix.

Twenty percent reported either that their "class of interest was not offered" or it was "not offered at a convenient time". And 15% each reported that they "lost interest" or supplied "other" reasons. "Lost interest" includes those who merely changed their minds and who were unable to specify a reason. The "other" category includes varied reasons which could not be categorized and are also listed in the appendix.

"Employment circumstances" was reported 13.4% of the time. In past studies, this has been the most frequently cited reason for dropping out of school. This category includes people who changed jobs, changed working hours, or who could

Table 1

Reasons Given By Students For Not
Registering For Classes
Spring 1978

Reason	n	% *
Moved or moving soon	9	8.6
Transportation problem	3	2.8
Class not offered at convenient time	16	15.3
Class of interest not offered	5	4.8
Lost interest or merely changed mind	16	15.3
Changed employment circumstances	14	13.4
Going to another school	17	16.3
Waiting to be admitted to certificate program	1	0.9
Financial reasons	7	6.7
Lack of child care	3	2.8
Family or personal emergency	5	4.8
Class of interest closed	23	22.1
Registered late	12	11.5
Other **	16	15.3
	147	

* Total will add up to more than 100 because more than one reason was given by some prospective students.

** See appendix for itemized list.

not afford the time to devote to classes due to full-time employment.

The remaining reasons given were sparsely distributed amongst "moving", "transportation problems", "family or personal emergency", "lack of child care", and "financial reasons".

Characteristics. Differences between those who register and those who do not register were found in their age distribution, the number of years of previous school, and their application date. No differences were found between the two groups' sex distributions. (See Table 2.)

Those who did not register were slightly older, had completed more years of previous school, and filed their applications earlier than those who did register. Whereas 44% of the registrants were under 21 years of age, only 26% of the non-registrants were of that age group. More non-registrants were in the 22 to 50 age groups (63%) than registrants (45%).

Also, 75% of the registrants had completed only high school education or less. More non-registrants (69%) had completed one or more years of college.

This data implies that the non-registrant is typically older and probably involved in a more complex life style than the recent high school graduate. They generally have had previous college experience and have expressed a desire for more but evidently are not pressed to do so.

Not surprisingly, more non-registrants (41%) than registrants (29%) applied for admission 20 or more days before registration, leaving more time for changes in schedules and inclination. A large number of registrants (36%) apply in the ten days before registration begins.

Summary and Implications

In summary, the largest number of prospective students who did not register reported that they did not register because the class that they wanted to take was closed. Other reasons given varied greatly. More non-registrants were older,

Table 2
Comparison of Characteristics
of Persons Who Did and Did Not Register
Spring 1978
(percentage distribution)

	New Students Who Did Not Register	New Students Who Did Register
Age		
17	1.92	2.84
18	6.73	19.06
19	5.76	10.26
20-21	11.53	11.70
22-25	28.84	17.34
26-30	16.34	14.03
31-40	18.26	13.79
41-50	6.73	6.74
51-65	3.84	3.78
Over 65	0	0.46
Sex		
Male	48.07	50.20
Female	51.93	49.80
Years of Previous School		
12 or less	29.80	75.00
13-14	58.64	16.66
15-16	10.57	6.66
16 or more	0.96	1.66
Application Date (# days before registration)		
0-10	19.58	35.59
11-20	40.20	32.20
21-30	18.55	15.25
31-45 (Xmas vacation)	3.09	6.77
46 or more	18.55	10.16

had more previous schooling, and applied for admission earlier than those who did register.

The results of the telephone interviews provided reliable and interesting insight into the problem of loss of prospective students. Whereas many situations reported by students do not fall into the realm of those for which the school can provide assistance, two major problem areas amenable to alleviation by school officials have been identified.

These areas include the great number of students who do not return because their desired class is closed and those prospective students who could be retained if they were more familiar with all class registration procedures, i.e. late registration and petitioning a class. Specifically, there are several classes which consistently fill up or are closed and turn prospective students away. It is possible that advance preparation for this situation could alleviate this problem.

Many respondents were motivated to attend school but were not aware that they could register late, after their temporary personal problems such as car repairs or illnesses had passed. Nor did some know that they could petition to be admitted into a class. Many are unsophisticated when it comes to dealing with bureaucracy, office personnel, lines, and class schedules. Additional and unique attempts to provide information and help for these persons would be beneficial.

APPENDICES

"Other" Reasons Given For Not Registering

1. Architectural classes must be taken concurrently. This is too time consuming for student.
2. Paralegal program didn't have what student wanted.
3. Completing ESL requirement before enrolling.
4. Difficulty encountered getting release from Citrus CCD to enroll in Fire Science program. Too much red tape involved.
5. Couldn't get on baseball team.
6. Didn't like student environment.
7. Needed to study for English proficiency exam first.
8. Out-of-state tuition required. Couldn't afford.
9. Out-of-state tuition required. Couldn't afford.
10. Incorrect instructions received from employee regarding Microwave Cooking class.
11. Incorrect instructions received from employee regarding admission requirements for an alien.
12. Information in schedule was incorrect.
13. Conflicting information (or interpretation of same) from Admission office worker and instructor regarding requirements for enrolling in class.
14. Couldn't find a place to park for two Monday's in a row.
15. Wanted to register at 7:30 pm (only convenient time for student) and was not admitted.
16. Didn't want to pay $4.00 for parking when could go to Orange Coast Community College and not pay for parking since only taking one night class.

Reasons Given For Going To Another School

1. Paralegal program at SAC didn't offer what student wanted.
2. Physics 1B wasn't offered.
3. Conversational Spanish class full.
4. Found out had to take prerequisite for Paramedic program before enrolling.
5. Attending CSUF, and school load there was too demanding.
6. Couldn't get on baseball team. Got on team at Fullerton College.
7. Class time changed. Going to Coast.
8. People at SAC not her type. Going to Fullerton College.
9. Moved closer to Cypress College.
10. Saddleback offered same class closer to home.
11. Advanced Real Estate Appraisal class not offered.
12. Registered at SAC just in case he couldn't get Fullerton College class.
13. Photography classes lacking in scope.
14. Class not offered at SAC at convenient time.

STUDENT IDENTIFIERS

1. Name _____

2. Perm [_____] ,

3. Telephone ___ ___ - ____

4. Age [__] 31

5. Sex 1 = Male 2 = Female [_] 33

6. Previous number of years school completed [__] 34

7. Date of application month/day/year [_____] 36

INTERVIEW RESPONSE

8. Reason for not registering [__] 42

"_____ [__] 44

_____

_____"

1 = Moved or moving soon
2 = Transportation problem
3 = Class not offered at convenient time
4 = Class of interest not offered
5 = Lost interest
6 = Changed employment circumstances
7 = Going to another school or high school
8 = Waiting to be admitted to certificate program
9 = Financial reasons
10 = Lack of child care
11 = Family or personal emergency
12 =
13 =
14 = Other (specify) _____

9. What college could have done [_] 45

"_____

_____"

1 = Not applicable
2 = Don't know
3 =
4 =
5 =

10. Would they mind being called again? 1 = Yes 2 = No [_] 46

11. Interviewer's comments (e.g. friendly, sincere, hostile, etc.)

_____

_____

12. Interviewer code number [_] 47

TELEPHONE RECORD

Date	Time	Response
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

13. Indicate here if response was taken from person other than above (1) [_]